



TOWNSHIP OF LONG HILL

COUNTY OF MORRIS

GILLETTE, HOMESTEAD PARK, MEYERSVILLE, MILLINGTON, STIRLING

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It's Saturday morning and, like most of us, I'm looking forward to a weekend that, as much as possible, will be spent enjoying this good weather with my family. It's been a few days now but I'm gradually settling into the idea of long lines at the grocery store, school closings, no sports on TV, canceled events, and obsessive hand washing. Non-hipster that I am, I'm even getting comfortable with fist bumping.

At times it can all seem a little overwhelming. There's no doubt that we're dealing with something unprecedented. However, as is usual with situations like the one we currently face, there is solace in the fact that they do tend to bring out the best in all of us. If we think about it, both as individuals and as a community, we have had to deal with adversity and times of emergency on many occasions. Yes, the current situation is on a much larger scale, but we know from experience, that if we act together, we will be able to overcome the current challenge, just as we did all the others.

COVID-19 is caused by a highly transmissible virus that we all should do our best to avoid. Although the disease is known to sometimes adversely affect members of vulnerable populations, it seems that the biggest danger it poses is that, if left unchecked, it could cripple our healthcare system. Simply put, if too many people get sick at the one time, we could very well not be able to muster enough medical personnel and resources to treat them. Everything you see and read just now in terms of "social distancing" and good hygiene practices is designed to slow the spread of the virus and allow our healthcare system to mount an adequate response. If we all do our part to take the prudent and reasonable precautions asked of us, this goal will be achieved. And we know these precautions work from the experience of the many other countries that have dealt, and are dealing with the same situation.

So rather than focus on the unfamiliar that has crept into our daily lives, we should remind ourselves of the overwhelming normality that still exists. As I write, I can hear the drone of a leaf blower in my neighbor's garden, the hum of traffic on the road outside my home, and the piercing shrillness of a fire truck's siren as it responds to an emergency. Life as we know it, for the most part, hasn't changed. Water still comes out of the faucet, we can cook, our homes are warm, emergency services still respond at a moment's notice with just a phone call, we can come and go as we please, albeit with a little more caution, and most importantly, the only shortages that exist are the temporary ones we create ourselves by buying way too much at any one time.

So, I ask you to take a deep breath when it all seems a little unbearable. Know that globally, nationally and locally, all available measures are being taken to contain the virus and combat the disease. Scientists are monitoring its spread, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies are researching cures and treatments, and our public health officials are hard at work educating us on how to alter our behavior to stay healthy and safe.

In Long Hill Township you can play a vital role in the global effort we are all part of. Please follow all the recommended precautions, avoid large groups, practice good hygiene habits, and, most importantly, do not go out or interact with others if you feel unwell. Please remember in terms of social distancing, it's just that, not social isolation. Check in on your neighbors, especially if they're elderly, think twice before you put everything on the grocery store shelf into your cart, and be empathetic and understanding when you see tempers a little frayed.

All arms of Long Hill Township government and emergency services are working in unison to protect residents, especially our most vulnerable populations. I and the other members of the Township Committee are in constant communication with our Public Health Officer, Emergency Management Coordinator, Police Chief, Emergency Squad Officers, Fire Chiefs, and Township Administrator. We have formed a Task Force and have initiated a regular meeting schedule so that we can plan and implement the appropriate measures as circumstances dictate. We are also in communication with our counterparts in other municipalities as well as at the County, State and Federal levels.

As we have learned during the many emergencies we have encountered in Long Hill Township over the years, open communication with all of you is an important element of our success. I commit to you that we will issue updates on a regular schedule as we meet and overcome the challenges of the next few weeks and, perhaps, months.

Stay safe and healthy, let's keep looking out for one another, and remember we're all in this together.

Brendan P. Rae
Mayor
Long Hill Township